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The Cult of the Now

BY ALBERT EDWARD DAY

THE cult of the now is everywhere. Its followers are in every communion—Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian. There are orthodox "now-ers" and heretical. They live in Maryland and they live in California. They are members of the intelligentsia and members of the proletariat. Some are very pious and some are very impious. Some belong by determination and others by default. Some are proud of their strict contemporaneousness. Others are not consciously but no less truly so. There are as many varieties of them as there are of pickles and palm trees, and they range in quality from the acid undesirableness of all pickles to the inevitable charm of the palm. But the blight of the now is upon them all alike.

They demand immediate returns in every undertaking. They try to do a cash business with life. They cannot see any reason for prayer, unless the object of their prayer makes its appearance by the dawn of the next morning at the very latest; for churchgoing unless it makes a difference in the cash register at the week end. Godliness must be at once profitable or it is not even permissible. Sabbath observance is mere superstition if they are not richer for closing on Sunday than when keeping open. They are sure that the value of any ecclesiastical policy is proved or disproved by reference to the collection plate or by a count of the congregation. They have no feeling for imponderables.

They are impatient with slow processes. Culture makes no claim upon them unless it can be had in six weeks. The study of Shakespeare is vain if it does not produce a well defined mental polish by the time half a dozen tragedies are hastily covered by restless eyes. Mathematics, languages, history—what good are they unless you can watch yourself growing at the end of every lesson?

The cult of the now makes no room for either the long periods of gestation or the arduous labors of criticism and correction that are indispensable to a finished

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creation. One who has attained a considerable eminence tells of his beginnings: "My language was commonplace, my vocabulary limited, my grammar shaky and my phrases hackneyed." And what did he do about it? He worked and waited for ten years before his first great success came. Rudyard Kipling declared: "There is no line of my verse or prose which has not been mouthed until the tongue has made all smooth." But our now-ers are impatient of drill and averse to rewriting, and so we have presses turning out "potboilers" offered by "indolent mystics who consider a successful novel a favorable act of God or an upsurging of some hereditary blessing or spontaneous combustion." We are plagued by publicists who write solemn books on the destiny of nations none of which has the remotest relation to destiny or is worth the reader's time or energy.

The cult of the now was largely responsible for the Civil War. Slavery was on the way out. The coming of machinery was rendering slave labor even more unprofitable than it had always been. The influences of education and religion and world opinion were undermining the social approval which gave slaveholders their standing in some of our states. But the fiery impatience of northern agitators made war the only solution of slavery's curse. And a horrible solution it was —hundreds of thousands dead, other thousands maimed and bereft, a southland ravaged, a reconstruction period which was in some respects more terrible than the war itself, sowing seeds of bitterness whose harvests we are still reaping. One can loathe slavery, as I do with my very soul, whether it be chattel slavery or wage slavery, and still recognize that if there had been more patience in the north with the tragedy in southern cotton fields and more penitence in the north over its own sins in New England industrial towns, if there had been more of the charity that suffers long and is kind, the slavery question could have had another solution than a Civil War, which with all its individual heroisms, its noble Abraham Lincoln and Robert E. Lee, will ever be a black chapter in American history.

NO SWIFT CURE FOR SOCIAL MALADIES

It was the cult of the now which made prohibition a tragedy because of its collapse. I have a right to speak there because I was on the firing line against alcohol as I am now and will be until I die. "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging, and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise." Nothing that has been written will ever tell the whole truth about drink and tell it in stronger and more unimpeachable words than those lines from the Book. We were making steady advance in our program of educating the mind of youth, creating a social conscience, developing local option laws so that communities that had reached a conviction about the nuisance of liquor and liquor sales could exile it. Then came the opportunity created by the demands of war, and a mistaken but real idealism engendered by what we believed was a crusade for peace. We imposed prohibition on communities where there was no genuine conviction in its favor, expecting some miracle of reverence for law to persuade men to forget their thirst and climb the water wagon. Social miracles like that do not happen. Agelong habits and attitudes are not rooted out by legislation at Washington nor by the magic of constitutional enactment. We tried to go too fast and we lost the ground we had gained when there was less impatience and more intelligence in the effort to create a sober nation.

The cult of the now is at work in America in other and equally grave matters affecting social progress and human destiny. Indignant at the paradox of poverty in the midst of plenty (as it ought to be), alarmed over what is happening to American youth against whom the doors of opportunity are closed by our social inadequacies (as what friend of youth is not), it is urging untempered schemes for commerce and industry, agitating for social strategies which in Russia and Germany have clearly demonstrated their menace to all that makes human life truly human, writing hasty legislation whose chief result is the waste of natural resources and the vitiation of the stamina and independence and the self-respect of our citizenry, and is in some instances offering class war and revolution as the only but certain and swift cure of our social maladies.

TODAY'S FURIOUS FRENZIES

The cult of the now is totally incapable of the postponement of desire. It cannot wait to have anything it wants until it can pay for it. So it mortgages its whole future for luxuries which are necessary neither to decency nor to the enrichment of the mind nor to the growth of the soul. Every morning over the radio we hear the ritual of immediacy chanted by coddling voices which cry: "Why wait—fifty cents down and easy payments, and you can disport yourself in the garb of a queen." For the sake of the immediate satisfaction of pride or desire, the ogre of debt is invited into the home where he sits at the table and ruins every family meal, perches himself on the bedpost at night and makes mockery of peaceful sleep, fills every cranny in the house with the poison gas of anxiety and fear. The same incapacity for postponement is persuading youth to barter away its marital sacrament for roadside frolics, its palace of romance for parked cars in secluded lanes, its crown of fatherhood and motherhood for a fleeting caress, its honor for a furtive and futile clutch after happiness.

The cult of the now is mundane in its outlook: "We have only now, so let's make the most of it." Terrestrial pleasures, terrestrial hopes, terrestrial ambitions, terrestrial projects absorb its thought and consume its energy. A bird in the hand, though it be but a sparrow, is worth two in the bush though they be birds of paradise. There is not an enterprise in which they engage which contemplates anything which could not have its fulfillment on earth or which demands an eternity for its proper setting. The coin of time is the medium of exchange. The fading laurels of current Olympiads in sport or business or scholarship are the only honor they seek. The transient memories awakened by a name carved on a tombstone or over the doorway of some gift institution is the only immortality they prepare. There is a furious frenzy about their love-making, which is

pathetic witness to the fear that love has but a day ere the silences of the tomb stifle the brief moment of beauty which love is. Their hates are even more furious, for if time is the only judge and avenger, then judgment must be passed and penalties imposed at once, even though the evidence is not all in and the sufferer must take judgment into his own hands.

In many ways the worst aspect of this cult of the now is that it makes for such relativity in morals that ethical conduct in every realm is lowered. Since for them there is only the now, what is good for the now is the only good. What is possible in the now is the only ideal. So we have a mortality no more penetrating or inspiring than that which a recent Gifford lecturer sum-

Albert Edward Day

marizes in a single exhortation: "Let us be humanitarians, let us hurt each other as little as possible, for tomorrow we die." Better than the ethics of the jungle, to be sure, but not adequate for the demands or opportunities of even this life! The cult of the now misses entirely the significance of what Reinhold Niebuhr describes as the "impossible possibility." Its ethics becomes mere etiquette to reduce the awkward blunders and embarrassments of social intercourse, mere law of war which mitigate some of the barbarities of conflict but do nothing about war itself, mere rules of the game to keep the sport of business from being too horrible a prizefight; mere professional codes which one's instincts as a gentleman formulate and obey but which are incapable of making a Grenfell or a Schweitzer.

The cult of the now gives us a Franco who bombs women and children in the name of war against communism, and all the little Francos of the drawing room and counting house and mill who never do anything they do not have to do to win their point, but who always do that because that point means more than paradise or purgatory in their thinking. For them life is just a game of points which, in the eyes of sober judgment, becomes as pointless as a game of chess whose pawns and knights will at the end be consumed and whose players will soon be ashes, as voiceless and unremembered as the counters with which they play.

THE CHURCH TO BLAME

For this subtle corrosive cult the church is much to blame. It often paid too little attention to the now, was too exclusively occupied with the sweet-bye-and-bye. Too long was there apathy about now's misery and cruelties and injustice. Too many sermons were preached to the poor, urging content with their lot; to the slave exhorting meekness in the acceptance of his shackles; to the rich, skirting their responsibility to the common weal; to masters, avoiding carefully any reference to their smug brutalities. Many theologies and many ethics, like the plight of the man whose room had no floor, never touched the ground of common life. They dealt with abstractions and conventions, rather than with the worries and pains and problems of the man in the pew and on the street. They were rhapsodies rather than counsels about reality. For a long time the church seemed to be busy trying to prepare men for heaven instead of trying to regenerate a world that was often a hell for men and women, even if it did not literally send them to hell. For a long time the church's patience with tyrannies and tyrants was a vice rather than a virtue. Its otherworldliness made it good neither for this world nor for the one to come.

And history took its revenge, punished a neglect of the now with a hypnotism of the now, setting over against a worthless transcendentalism an absorbing humanism, answering a bigoted and complacent supernaturalism with an equally bigoted and cocksure naturalism. For the cult of the now, the church which merely had a tomorrow has a grave responsibility.

Once again with gladness and expectation we turn to Jesus. He has thrown so much light upon our problems that almost instinctively we go to him when we find ourselves groping amid the shadows of contemporary confusion. And what do we discover in him?

JESUS ALONE HOLDS THE KEY

One who made the most of the now. There were others who thought they were reapers of all the harvest of living available in that time—Caiphas, Pilate, the prosperous merchants of Jerusalem, the sleek matrons of Capernaum, the dwellers in Herod's palace. There was not one of them who would have traded places with Jesus. But honestly, of all the people in that day, is there anyone whose life you would rather have had than his? Gethsemane, Pilate's hall, Calvary, the kiss of Judas, the crown of thorns, the five bleeding wounds, the sneer of the gaping multitude all thrown in, would you not rather have had his life than theirs? No one in his day wrested as much from the now as he, so much worth the having, so much that endures the fierce

scrutiny and tempered judgment of the accumulating centuries.

Jesus was constantly doing something for other people's now. No dreamy representative of celestial splendors he, but one who knew that people had aching joints and palsied limbs and hunger and thirst and wayward children and surly overlords and ungrateful employees and bereavement, and who within the limits of his time and energy and his dominant mission did the very best he could for them. He did not live in a vacuum nor give way to endless moonings about some future age. In spite of some modern interpreters he was not so busy with absolutes that he had no interest in and answer to problems and crises which must be settled in a relative, temporal, blundering society. He was the most contemporaneous of all his contemporaries, the most concrete of the then prophets and teachers.

THE PATIENCE OF JESUS

But Jesus was one who knew how to wait. Do you think he did not care that Roman tyranny rubbed raw the minds of his people, that soldiers jostled them on the streets, snatched cloaks from their shoulders, took them out of their fields and away from their shops and compelled them to carry their knapsacks and spears, insulted their daughters, made fun of their religion, did all of the mean and exasperating things which an army of occupation could do to a conquered subject people? Of course he did. Again and again he made sympathetic reference to their plight as you know if you have read the Sermon on the Mount. "If any man smite thee on the one cheek. . . . If any man take thy cloak. . . . If any man compel thee to go with him a mile." Jesus was not living in the clouds but among people and with a heart that ached for them. But he knew that for them there was no present remedy for their suffering that would not be worse than the disease. Some advocated taking the sword; he replied, "He that taketh the sword shall perish by the sword." Some urged individual resistance, but he said, "Agree with thine adversary quickly whilst thou art in the way with him." There was no escape through present struggle. Waiting, patient waiting in the spirit of forgiveness and moral triumph until God stepped into history to deliver them, was his counsel. They spurned it and brought upon the city and nation the wrath of Rome and appalling destruction.

THE ABSOLUTE STANDARD

Recognizing the apocalyptic influence on his thinking, nevertheless it is true that Jesus stands before history as one who knew that haste makes waste, that impatience brings destruction rather than deliverance, that the realist's now may mean a regretful never, that refusal to postpone often ushers in perdition. The same wise patience is evident in his attitude toward the individual. You will certainly remember his parable about the man who found tares growing among the wheat. His servant wanted to pluck out the tares at once, but the master's wisdom said: "No, lest rooting out the tares you also destroy the wheat. Let both grow together until the harvest." Let grow! That is the word of a man who knew that now is not always the day of correction, that impetuous onslaught upon evil may root out the good and leave nothing behind but defeat and ruin.

In Jesus we see one who knew that the best assurance of high relative performance is the absolute standard. He gave no code, something that has to do with external conduct; no set of rules, which could have validity only if there was a reasonable expectation that everybody would obey them. He gave standards which reached into a man's inner life, his very thoughts and purposes: "Whosoever looketh . . . hath already committed. . . . He that hateth his brother is a murderer." He exalted an ideal that does not depend upon what other people do to you, is no nicely calculated give and take. "You have heard it said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy, but I say unto you, love your enemies." And he did not hesitate even to ask men to strive for perfection: "Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect." Of course nobody can be that. It represents nothing that can become absolutely ours now. As far as life here is concerned, it is an "impossible possibility." But that impossible possibility when accepted does more for the now than any of the nice, neat little religious codes which can have their perfect expression in any moral drawing room or playing field.

AGELESS MEANINGS AND VALUES

Many of you have read Mr. H. G. Wells' confession that he was brought up in an environment where success was measured by earthly standards, where social climbing and wealth getting were taken for granted as men's chief glory. Then one day he met a man whose great ambition was to discover truth and whose chief passion was to serve humanity. It was a look into another world, a confrontation by another way of life. It at first shocked him and then became an inspiration. That is what Jesus did and does. To all the conventions and complacencies of the now, its relative codes and mediocre conduct, he brings the ideals and standards of eternity. He perpetually shocks us by what at first seems his unreasonable demands upon us, and then after awakening us creates a divine discontent which is forever criticizing our codes and our conduct, stretching them to new measures, begetting in us profound moral passion and more unselfish performance. He faced his own age with the ages and became a citizen not of the age but of the ageless, with ageless meanings and ageless values.

And here is high religion for us; do all we can about the now, its injustice, its poverty, its appalling human waste, but do not jeopardize the afterwhile by an impulsive, impetuous, ill-advised now. Lives by the absolute and the eternal, absolute purity, absolute unselfishness, absolute truth. You cannot live them but the relative is less relative when it is an effort toward the absolute. The temporal is less temporizing with evil and imperfection when it is a pilgrimage toward the eternal. What is good for the now is never good enough for the now. Only eternity suffices for the needs of time.

For Country and for God

By Alfred W. Hurst

Can two walk together, except they be agreed? Amos 3:3.

Do two men walk together, unless they have made an appointment? (American Translation.)

I SAW the spires of Oxford
As I was passing by,
The gray spires of Oxford
Against a pearl-gray sky;
My thoughts were with the Oxford men
Who went abroad to die.
. . . .
They left the silent river,
The cricket field, the quad,
The shaven lawns of Oxford
To seek a bloody sod;
They gave their merry lives away
For country and for God.

It is not unusual for modern nations to associate God and country as objects of loyalty and devotion. Indeed, as far back as human history extends it has been a common practice to link the gods with the fortunes of state and to bring religion to the aid of armies and governments. The history of religion is in part the record of state cults, and the political chronicles of the nations cannot be accurately or completely narrated apart from the religious faith and motivation of the people. Men have fought battles in the stirring conviction that their ideals and sacred institutions were in danger of being overturned and rendered desolate. They have felt that in some way the destiny of God's cause was bound up inseparably with the cause which they had elected to defend. They were fighting for *God* and *country*. And even the most disillusioned audience would feel it sacrilege to deny that, in the several wars America has fought, the flower of our young manhood believed in all sincerity they were giving

. . . their merry lives away
For country and for God.

GOD OR MARK HANNA AS GUIDE

It is generally accepted that the United States of America was conceived and nurtured in the atmosphere of religious faith and devotion. Our generation needs to be reminded that the Pilgrim Fathers came to these shores in search of freedom. The founders of the Republic were God-fearing and God-revering men who sought to establish a nation where men could worship in their own way, and where freedom of speech, press and assembly would be guaranteed to all. The abuses to which religion had been subjected in the Old World were to be avoided by the separation of church and state. But, while they were convinced that organized religion and organized statecraft should be separated, they did not intend that religious idealism and politics should be forever strangers.

It has not been uncommon for the leaders of the nation to turn to God for guidance in times of unusual stress and perplexity. There have been times however when it seemed that religion has been prostituted for secular uses. For example, President McKinley reported that before he decided upon his course in the Philippines he spent the whole night in prayer and conferred with Mark Hanna. Although Mr. McKinley may have believed sincerely that his decision was God-guided, from the place where we view the panorama of American history it appears Mark Hanna had more to do with it than God!

It is not strange that God and country should be linked together in the thinking of every American because America is traditionally a religious nation. And there is much to admire in this reference of national affairs to the divine. But let us not close our eyes to the fact that there are grave risks in such a practice against which every loyal American should be on his guard.

WORSHIPING A TRIBAL GOD

Perhaps the most serious threat from a religious point of view is the danger of worshiping a tribal god. This is a reversion to the primitive religion of mankind when each tribe or clan had its own god whose magical and supernatural powers were pledged to his tribe and whose character was as frail and imperfect as primitive and selfish man could imagine. Early in their tribal history the Hebrews worshiped such a tribal deity. Yahweh was limited to a certain territory and to the tribes of Israel. They were his chosen people and he was their favorite god. They had formed a sacred pact to be loyal to each other, especially in battle against the surrounding tribes and their deities. Perhaps there is nothing more thrilling in the Old Testament than this record of the developing idea of God from a tribal super-chieftain to the universal Father of the human race. The people which gave the world such a tremendous and beautiful faith deserves something more than persecution!

He whom we Christians call Lord and Master filled to overflowing that concept of universal Fatherhood and linked with it in an unforgettable and inseparable relation the concept of universal brotherhood. We must not allow a narrow form of patriotism to rob the world of such a high and pure faith.

Wars are based upon a tribal conception of God. We pray to the God of America for victory, Germans pray to the God of Germany for successful conquest, and in like faith other nations seek supremacy through divine cooperation. Obviously one God cannot grant all these prayers, and in our saner moments we know he does not hear any of them since he has not pledged his aid to any whose hands are stained with blood.

The practice of praying in wartime for God to give *our* nation the victory and to protect and give success to *our* boys in uniform is given a stinging rebuke in the play, "What Price Glory?" written by Maxwell Anderson and Laurence Stallings. A noncommissioned officer, Kiper, who is both cynical and profane, evinces some ethical and religious insights more genuine and penetrating than many people who pass in ecclesiastical

circles as saints. He says: "The chaplain said my folks was all praying for me to come through, and for God to spare me after hearing their prayers. God, I ain't that dirty a coward! That's a case of saying, O God, don't kill our child. Kill every other kid in the neighborhood, but bring the one marked Kiper safe back home. . . . No, I don't want none of that for mine. And you can take all your New Testaments with the khaki backs and throw them in the incinerator so far as I want anything out of them. I'd rather have a book of cigarette papers any time."

If that sounds offensive and profane, let us remind ourselves that it is no worse than the provincialism which makes of patriotism a fetish and makes of God a tribal deity who is expected to bring our armies to success and protect our boys from harm while they blow the other boys in the world-neighborhood to smithereens.

We use this phrase "For country and for God" so glibly, as if God were bound to this country by some unbreakable tie—a new variety of Siamese Twins on a grand continental scale. We assume that our fathers entered into an agreement with God in the nation's sacred past and we will hold him to his agreement to see his chosen people through every tight place. Moreover, God ought to be, and doubtless is, ashamed not to be on America's side in any international conflict. He should be flattered to be admitted and admired by such a choice people.

A narrow nationalist cannot worship the universal Father until he changes his mind by being "soundly converted."

FALSE PATRIOTISM

Closely related to this danger of worshiping a tribal deity is a moral danger. A tendency grows up to judge people by their nationality and their glib use of patriotic slogans and symbols instead of the test of interior motives and traits of character. Shabby personal character may "get by" under the false cloak of patriotism. As in politics the faithful are judged by their party regularity, so in nationalism the loyal are those who can boast their national regularity, "my country right or wrong."

But what if God has no favorite sons? What if America is not the center of the universe? What if God judges us according to more spiritual and ethical standards?

In early Hebrew clan life the test of divine approval was membership in the clan. Until the day of the eighth century prophets religion was largely a national affair. But the prophets made the test ethical and required each individual to stand on his own feet. Henceforth the test was not citizenship in the nation but justice and kindness and reverence for God. They followed God out across the national boundaries of their world and discovered the universal Fatherhood of God. They emptied religion of its national exclusiveness and poured into it some splendid ethical content. This gain must not be lost in this day of the revival of nationalism and the blurring of ethical issues which accompanies it.

Moreover, there is the danger of using the phrase "For country and for God" in such a manner as to confuse the two, as though loyalty to one's country made one automatically loyal to God, and fidelity to God required 100 per cent allegiance to one's country and its policies whether right or wrong.

And then there is suggested the part which religion may play in "whooping up" the war spirit in case the nation gets into conflict. Thus we have the spectacle of church leaders blessing the carnage of war. In this supposed alliance hate and prejudice wear the cloak of loyalty to God and country and inspire multitudes to show their zeal for God by slaying human beings

Alfred W. Hurst

whom they imagine to be little devils but who in reality are like the rest of us.

God will not forsake America or any nation, but we may forsake him and his way.

The next time you use or hear the words "For country and for God," call to mind those words of the prophet Amos who said, "Can two walk together, except they be agreed." There is no certainty that God will walk with us unless we go his way. He says to America and to all the nations, "We might walk along together if you are going my way." Again I can hear him saying: "Why do you say 'God and country,' 'God and country,' and do not the things God delights in? What is the multitude of your services and the salutings of your flags? When you raise your hand to salute the stars and stripes I will hide my eyes from you unless your hearts are pure and free from hate."

"God and country" is used as if in reality it meant God and Company, Incorporated under the laws of the U. S. A., of, by and for the American people. Let

us not assume that this company cannot be dissolved without our consent, for God controls and casts the deciding vote and there are moral requirements for membership in any firm of which he is a Partner. It is not those who have been the most successful in plundering the world's resources, nor those who can think of the most evil epithets to fling at the other races of mankind, nor even those who are the richest, the biggest, the strongest, but those who are the most magnanimous, the most just, merciful, humble, loving and forgiving, those who are the strongest on sharing, who make acceptable partners.

REAL PARTNERSHIP WITH GOD

No, if this company is to be kept intact it must be incorporated according to the laws of the Kingdom of Heaven and based on a Christian code of ethics.

To associate God and country in thought and language as we habitually do constitutes a tremendous challenge to our country and its individual citizens. It is no light thing to claim close companionship with him whom we delight to think of in terms of Spirit, Love, Justice, Kindness and Mercy.

The American translation of our text is enlightening: "Can two walk together unless they have made an appointment?" How can God and country walk together unless they have and keep an appointment? Our forefathers said: "O God, we as a people would walk with thee." And God said: "Let us make an appointment. Let us meet at the junction where the three great highways—Humility, Justice and Love—merge into the one great Highway of Humanity." One wonders if there have not been times when we have kept him waiting because we were keeping the appointment on the wrong corner where hate and injustice and arrogant pride join in a broad and dangerous road that leads to destruction. It may be that the Lonely God has traveled on because we refused or failed to keep the appointment. Still, at the beginning of each new day he keeps that lonely tryst in the hope that some day we may discover our mistake and keep the appointment where God waits for us.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FLAG

The presence of our country's flag in the church is a symbol of the challenge of God to country. The display of a flag in the church may mean one of two things: It may mean that the church and religion are kow-towing to the state and are ruled by it; or it may mean the dedication of country to the purposes of God in the world. It should mean that America wishes to keep her appointment with God.

God is interested in all nations. There is not one in which God has not invested heavily of his own life for the sake of dividends to be paid in the coin of richer, happier life for his children. If all nations would keep their appointment with God on the right corner, they would all meet on common ground to travel together in harmony and fellowship the Highway of Humanity up to the City of God.

We love America, but that does not mean we must hate other nations and compete with them, any more than love for our families signifies hatred and friction with other families in the neighborhood. We love America and would like always to be able to say "God and country." We do not want ever to have to say "God or country." We do not want to be compelled to choose between them. But if ever our country should fall into the control of unwise and unrighteous leaders and should fail to keep her appointment with God on Brotherhood Street, as Christians we would have no choice. We would have to say, "God's will be done in my life."

The growth of military dictatorships and of narrow nationalism makes one tremble for fear America too may be snared. May she be saved the leadership of visionless and selfish men. May "God" and "country" be wedded eternally by the sanctifying power of an unselfish purpose, of noble idealism, and of a world-encircling good will in serving and sharing with others. Then, with renewed devotion and in possession of God's international outlook, we may all give our lives away "For country and for God."

City Man Finds God

By Charles H. Heimsath

"GOD made the country and man made the city." So goes the proverb, with something generally added about the responsibility of the devil for the small town. Influenced by our rural inheritance, by our nineteenth century romanticism, by our biblical literature of a pastoral people, and by our own grim contact with the city itself, we are apt to suppose that God is to be found in the country but not in the city.

Nor is it surprising that the spiritual insights of the rustic seer sound strange among our streamlined skyscrapers. The quiet consciousness of the divine Presence which the Galilean herdsman carried with him is hard to capture amid the traffic of State Street, or even on the lake shore—surrounded on a summer afternoon by thousands of sun bathers. The man of God in Judea expresses the deep things of his soul in images which we scarcely comprehend. Take, for example, such a word as "home," ordinarily so rich in sacred overtones, and hear in Chicago a high school boy define it as "the place in front of the garage." It is not surprising that modern man, with his tradition of piety inspired by green pastures and vast Judean skies, should find himself inwardly impoverished when he moves into the city. Nor is it surprising that he should be forced slowly, painfully to rediscover God in the very places where he seemed most surely to have been lost, in the din, and movement, and confusing grandeur of the great metropolis.

Now city man is developing a new mysticism to fit his unfamiliar spiritual surroundings, and is creating a fresh language and imagery for his piety. He is beginning to live again in the full assurance that the Lord, if not his Good Shepherd, is at least his Good Companion. The seers and prophets of New York and Chicago have by searching found out God, and I give you six places

where they have discovered him in their cities: (1) in the skyline, (2) in the masses, (3) in the machine, (4) in the symphony, (5) in the conflict, (6) in the cathedral.

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First, the religious personality in the city has found God in the skyline.

On Sundays and bank holidays in England people ride on bicycles far out into the country, whole families of them riding miles from London. During the Jubilee Celebration of Queen Mary and King George a writer in the *Manchester Guardian* cites the "holiday habit" as one of the most significant social changes in England. The new masses in the city demand the holiday, not only in order to escape *from* something, but to return *to* something. The blue heavens, the green pastures and the still waters declare a glory and suggest a presence which the people have lost in the city. Our mysticism is still largely pastoral.

But city man is developing a new urban mysticism. Some of the same thoughts of God which were once inspired by the myriad stars on a Galilean hillside are now evoked by the skyline of Chicago viewed from Lake Shore drive. Who of you has not felt awe, wonder, humility and delight as you motored past magnificent lighted buildings against the night? Carl Sandburg is one of the sensitive interpreters of the spiritual overtones of the skyline. Note this passage from his book, *The People, Yes:*

> Hold down the skylines now with your themes,
> Proud marching oblongs of floodlighted walls.
> Your bottom rocks and caissons rest
> In money and dreams, in blood and wishes.
>
> Stand on your tall haunches of checkered windows with your spikes of white light
> Speaking across the cool blue of the night mist:
> Can we read our writing?
> What are we saying on the skyline?

Last Christmas this question was answered symbolically for me by the huge cross of lighted windows in the Palm Olive Building. Edward Carpenter in the opening lines of his brief lyric, "Over the City," leaves no uncertainty about the Presence in the metropolis which disturbs us with the joy of elevated thoughts:

> Over the great city
> Where the wind rustles through the parks and gardens
> In the air, the high clouds brooding,
> In the lines of street perspective, the lamps, the traffic,
> The pavements and the innumerable feet upon them,
> I Am: make no mistake—do not be deluded.

Once at midnight I clambered into my car standing in the public parking space on Monroe Street facing Michigan Boulevard and began cranking it for my dash home to Evanston. Then I saw the grand, brilliant spectacle of lighted buildings before me, stopped turning the engine, and sat with my arms resting on the wheel, awed, quietly looking. I thought of how the old lake had been beating on these shores long before this brilliant spectacle was reflected in its waters, and how it would be beating here long after this light had vanished. Dwelling upon the skyline of Michigan Boulevard my thoughts were linked to the mystery of God's eternal being, just as were the thoughts of an ancient nomad in the dim beginnings of history as he gazed at the lovely mountains of Judea:

> Before the mountains were brought forth,
> Or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world,
> Even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.

II

Second, the city man finds God in the masses of people upon his streets and sidewalks.

My friend Charles Hatch Sears of New York City in his new book, *City Man,* reveals himself as a rare combination of veteran straphanger, poet and practical Christian. The unknown masses of people with whom he mingles daily do for his soul what the skylines do for others:

> City Man, who has long mingled with crowds, has often observed the strange influence of a mass on a lone man. Sometimes a crowd transmits to one a vital force. For example, when at his best and thoroughly awake, City Man finds a subway crowd mentally stimulating. . . . Perhaps this prepares one to appreciate the mystical forces resident in the city which compensate to a considerable degree for the losses which City Man experiences through his removal from direct touch with nature. This mass influence is part of the dynamic power of a great city—its hold on people—its lure for people—attraction of people for people as people.

For Raymond Kresensky Christ is more surely to be found upon the unaccustomed sidewalks of our cities than in the accustomed skies from which some of us have all too long awaited his coming:

> I looked for Christ in the hidden skies,
> A flaming vision to blind my eyes—
> While Christ walked by with stumbling feet
> Along with the men of Madison Street.

Here is a man whose feet are so acquainted with the feel of concrete that they hardly recognize the give of sod, singing in his own language the insight to which James Russell Lowell gave classic expression in his "Vision of Sir Launfal." Right. Why should we not find God in the light of human eyes as well as in the light of setting suns? Remembering the human compassion of Jesus, can we doubt that he is more surely in the city's masses than in all the realm of nature?

III

Again, the city man finds God even in the terrifying, impersonal machine.

Can there be anything less spiritual, less divine, than a smoothly running machine? But city man has given a mind and soul to it; we may well say that the machine best expresses his will to power. By the machine he has done a thing more significant even than building the proud and chaotic material structure which we call twentieth century civilization so different for example from the classic civilization of ancient Greece—by the machine city man has experienced to some extent divine creative satisfaction. He was puny, but now he has felt

power—mad, raw, captivating power. This sense of creative power released by his machine has caused him to feel himself at one with him "that maketh the Pleiades and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into morning, and maketh the day dark with night." Man cannot make the stars, but by his telescope he can penetrate their mystery, by his Planetarium he can reconstruct them in their courses, and by his electrical dynamo he can tap the power which controls them.

The danger is that the machine may lead the city man to a very ancient and very heathen mistake about God. There is a story often overlooked in the Bible which the city man may well heed; it is the story of the Tower of Babel. In a period of material prosperity the

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children of Israel said: "Let us build a city and a tower, whose top shall reach to heaven; and let us make a name." Intoxicated by the sense of their own material achievement, these people believed for one giddy moment that they could build a skyscraper so high that mortals upon its roof could fraternize with God. So they mistook the divine nature and lost the meaning of their destiny. City man may well remember that God dwells not in the machine itself, nor in the material grandeur of its masterpiece, the modern metropolis. God lives in the mind of him who creates the machine for good, in the spirit of them that control it for the common welfare. The machine is an instrument, but always an instrument, by which man may penetrate to some extent the mystery of creation: the machine may become a servant, but always a servant, by which men of good will may ultimately by mass production beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks.

IV

Fourth, city man finds God in the symphony.

It has often been said that the worst people are to be found in the city, but also the best. When we are tempted to remember that Al Capone lived in Chicago, let us recollect that Chicago was also the home of Jane Addams. Dr. Sears sees the gravitation of men and women of highest intelligence and ability toward each other as the major factor in the development of the modern city. Specialists, experts, creative artists, reformers, executives, spiritual leaders all are there. The prophet of old descended from the hill country of Tekoa to condemn with a rustic's indignation the luxurious life of the city dwellers, but the social reformer of today is the sophisticated product of the city's life itself. The city man, therefore, not only enjoys the opportunity of feasting his soul daily upon the best of all cultural achievements, but of public and often private contact with the contemporary creators of truth, beauty and goodness.

Symbolic of the city's spiritual resources is the symphony—the Philadelphia, Boston, Chicago, New York Philharmonic, brilliant musical organizations to which are attached the names of cities. The Metropolitan Opera could only have been achieved in a world center of sufficient artistic talent, cultural appreciation and financial generosity. Take also the Chicago museum of art—an institution which only a metropolis could produce. Sometimes I become so vividly aware of spiritual beauty expressed within the confines of the Art Institute of Chicago that I am moved when I pass in front of the building to uncover my head! Poets of the city sing the true grandeur of the city in terms of its men and women of spiritual greatness. Says Walt Whitman in his "Chants Democratic":

> The greatest city is that which has the greatest men or women,
> If it be a few ragged huts, it is still the greatest city in the whole world.

Let us not be deceived; against the background of its materialism stand the personalities of men and women who have brilliantly mastered the spirit. By contact with these people, city man is led to God.

V

Once more, city man finds God in the very conflict of his surroundings.

In the city we feel the full effect of all the tensions of modern life—between fascism and communism, between Gentiles and Jews, between democracy and the totalitarian state, between capital and labor, between militarism and pacifism. In this conflict by which truth, justice and peace are determined, the city man finds another vivid approach to God. Though he is too deafened by the roar of his own elevated trains to hear the still, small voice, he does discover God in the whirlwind.

The theme of the writer of Hebrews is the superiority of the Christian dispensation over the Jewish. This superiority is demonstrated in part by the superiority of Mount Zion over Mount Sinai. Here is a remarkable

support of the religious aspiration of the city man. The Christian ideal is to find its final fulfillment, not upon a lonely mountain in the wilderness but upon an elevation in the metropolis, not by a primitive tribal legalism but by the enlightened influence of "the spirits of just men made perfect."

Out of the welter of conflicting opinions, personalities, economic panaceas and governmental principles into which he is thrust, city man emerges as a social being. He must become one, or perish! Dr. Sears finds the new urban personality which is emerging characterized by his expanding social awareness, his effort to lift moral conduct to the social level, and by a growing recognition of the necessity of social control. True city man has given his assent reluctantly enough to these moral attitudes, but he realizes how far he has traveled when he falls into conversation with a rigid provincial. The American businessman has for long been governed by a high sense of professional honor; he is now developing a sense of social responsibility. A leader in the business life of Chicago said to me, "We are trying to do something for humanity." The new city man finds an approach to God in his impulse to build a more humane world.

The steel mill sky is alive.
The fire breaks white and zigzag
Shot on a gun-metal gloaming,
Man is long time coming.
Man will yet win.
Brother may yet line up with brother.

VI

Finally, the city man finds God in the cathedral.

Some city men commune with God, not in consecrated places at all, but in spots as unsanctified as a subway train. You may remember the poem by Chester Firkins called "On a Subway Express":

Speed! Speed! until the quivering rails
  Flash silver where the headlight gleams,
As when on Lakes the Moon impales
  The waves upon its beams.

Life throbs about me, yet I stand
  Outgazing on majestic Power;
Death rides with me, on either hand,
  In my communion hour.

You that 'neath country skies can pray,
  Scoff not at me—the city clod;—
My only respite of the Day
  Is this wild ride—with God.

But increasingly the hard pressed city man finds in the church itself a sanctuary for his spirit, a quiet place where he can escape from his exhausting world for the nurture of his soul. He cannot retire into the wilderness, but he can build a cathedral. A friend of mine, who often finds himself early in the morning walking on Park Avenue toward his New York office, told me that he habitually turns into St. Barthlomew's Church, the notable pulpit of the late Robert Norwood, for meditation and prayer. City churches by keeping their doors open most of the hours of the day for prayer and by supplying a formal service of beauty and strength, provide a refuge of worship most suited to the city man's new spiritual needs. Do you realize that a greater proportion of people in the city now go to churches than in the country? As did Isaiah, his biblical prototype, city man is finding the Lord in the temple, "sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up."

How to find God in the city? City man, who is the pioneer of modern life in its most characteristic aspects, answers: God in the skyline, God in the masses, God in the machine, God in the symphony, God in the conflict, God in the cathedral. In his own way and his own environment, city man has by searching found out God. This lovely invocation might well symbolize his religious aspiration:

Oh, Haunting Spirit of the Ever True,
Keep Thou the pressure of Thy way upon us.
We see a world too big to grasp;
We glimpse a city too far off to reach;
We trudge a way too long to walk;
We feel a truth too pure to understand.
We have a purpose that we cannot prove;
A life to live beyond the power of living;
A vision, time nor energy cannot contain;
But faith that all our effort will not be in vain.
Oh, Haunting Spirit of the Ever True,
Keep Thou the pressure of Thy way upon us.

A Religion of Make-Believe

By Clifford A. Nelson

But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the marketplaces, who call unto their fellows and say, We piped unto you, and ye did not dance; we wailed, and ye did not mourn. . . . And wisdom is justified by her works. Matthew 11:16, 17, 19.

CHILDREN have been alike in every age. In their games and play, the boys and girls of today are little different from the children who played on the streets of ancient Ur of the Chaldees. The archeologist at Pompeii can show the markings on the pavement where the youngsters of the city played a game similar to the "hop-skip-and-jump" of our own childhood days. Childhood is a time of fairyland and make-believe and we would not have it otherwise. The girl with her dolls and dishes and the boy with his toys and tin soldiers is enjoying the glad and carefree abandon that is the right of every child.

And always children in their play have imitated their elders. Who of us does not remember the fun of playing "house" or "school," and what boy is there who has missed the exciting game of war with noise and battle which he has learned from his belligerent ancestors? In the streets of the villages and cities of Palestine in Jesus' day the common game for the children was to play wedding and funeral. Nothing more

exciting happened in town than the day when some maiden was made a bride. The whole countryside was astir and followed the procession with the bride astride the camel in her finest decorations. Music and dancing and glad shouts of joy were the order of the day in honor of the young people who were joined in wedlock. Not less colorful was the funeral pageantry. Long processions of friends and mourners were hired to make loud their wailings. It was a time when everyone could participate, for was not this the way of all flesh and must not all men share in death? These two rites captivated the imaginations of the children and often they would be found playing glad or sad in imitating the grown-ups.

Jesus watched the children on the streets of Capernaum. He saw them entering into the spirit of the game and trying their best to play the game of make-believe. And he also saw the accompanying quarrels. Some of them would not play. Some did not want to play either at funeral or wedding. They were pouting and petulant and refused to be drawn into any play.

It became the occasion of another parable to him. People are like that. "My own generation is very much like those children," he said. They refused to take seriously either the minor tones of judgment, or the joyous major tones of grace and gladness in the symphony of the Kingdom.

I. AN AGE OF IMMATURITY

It was a generation that refused to grow up. And such a generation is to be pitied! An age that is playing with toys instead of looking with full-grown maturity on the seriousness of life cannot be expected to make great advances. If one has ever been in one of our institutions for the feeble-minded and looked on men and women whose gray matter and emotional control is undeveloped so that they cling to their rag dolls and their marbles in spite of size and years, one is aware of having looked on one of the saddest scenes in life. It was this tragic thing that Jesus pitied in his own day. Grown people—a whole generation of them —that refused to mature, acting like children. There was a sense, of course, in which Jesus said that grown-ups must be like children. Except a man was born again and became as a little child he could not enter into the Kingdom. But that childlikeness was not the childlishness of children living in a land of fantasy. The childlikeness which Jesus asked was itself the task of grown and mature men setting out to live in the spirit of Jesus. Childishness must be laid aside, as St. Paul put it: "When I was a child I spake as a child, I thought as a child; but now that I am become a man I have put away childish things."

It was particularly with reference to the responses of his age to John and himself that Jesus spoke this parable. John had arrived to cry out in tones of rugged and stern judment that men must repent if they were to flee from the wrath which was to come. Forbidding and uncompromising had been the voice from his pulpit in the wilderness. No one who came to hear was spared. His preaching had been like an x-ray; he saw the sins of his time and asked that they be removed with drastic moral surgery. Like a doctor's floroscope had been his words as he probed the sore spots in his diagnosis of the age and asked that they be taken away.

The age was only offended. They would not play at funeral. John was too harsh. An indifferent generation could not understand so serious a man. They would have liked to dress him up with better clothes and have honey in his words rather than in his dinner. Their guilty consciences made them hate him. When Herod finally chained him in prison the leaders were relieved. It is a significant thing that when he was finally put to death it was in a mood of play, at a court entertainment in the palace. The whim of an irresponsible king gave the order.

And now the Son of Man was come. His character was different. He spoke of himself as the bridegroom. He invited his age to the wedding feast. There was a note of grace and gladness in his message. He called for joy among the friends of the bridegroom. He walked the sunny side of life and brought the smile and happiness of childhood into people's faces. He was genial and responded to the invitation of friendship, because he had come to make friends with men. No feast table was too high or too lowly for him.

But the age would not receive him. They said John was possessed of a devil, but they stigmatized Jesus as a glutton and a wine-bibber. They called him "friend of sinners" as a term of reproach. They followed him, rather hounded him, wherever he went. If he brought joy, they made sad faces. When he lightened the burden of sins they said he blasphemed, and when he raised the dead in Bethany, we are told that they began plotting his death. It was uncomfortable to have this man of joy and peace about, and they were not content until they had him spiked to the cross. It was an age of fault-finding children that abhorred moral earnestness and the characters of John and Jesus could not be tolerated.

Again and again Jesus reproached his age for playing at a game of religion rather than being in dead earnest. He is almost playful as he points out the ludicrous manners of the Pharisees. They strut about the streets, making broad their phylacteries and uttering long, meaningless prayers to be seen and heard of men. Their alms are heralded with a trumpet and always they are anxious to show off. They are like actors playing a part that is not genuine. True religion, he said, is not like that at all. It is a matter of serious import between a man and his God. This other is only masquerading. Like children at a halloween party putting on masks in fun, or grown-ups at a masquerade ball playing a part that is not their own. Off with the masks! The soul is naked and laid open before the Eternal God. When you pray go in the closet and speak with the Father who seeth in secret. The Father hates sham and hypocrisy and loves only truth and sincerity.

What could Jesus expect of such an age? How did he dare to make it the scene of his redemptive life? There is only one answer. He dared to take the perspective of the ages. He was content to know that wisdom was justified of her children and that they

that were of the truth would hear his voice and let him lead them into the Kingdom. He saw no other way than to cast forth his message like a seed that is sown and believe that those who were in earnest would catch the meaning and transmit it to the world. His counsel was to a saving remnant to take the kingdom by force and grasp its redemption for an indifferent and heedless age. The remembrance of that high faith of his is the most thrilling story of the ages.

II. JESUS' GENERATION AND OURS

Do we dare take that judgment of Jesus and say that our generation is like the children in the market place? Or have we really grown up and become children of wisdom? Certainly nineteen centuries of contemplation on the message of the Master must have made us different. We do well to look at this indictment of Jesus lest the charge of infantilism be directed at us.

Our own generation too has played at funeral. Eleven million graves in Flanders Field and around the widespread battlegrounds of a great war, where the finest and most handsome of our youth have been left to decay. Eleven million graves and the sad accompaniments of wailing and bitterness and hate that engulfed a world in strife. Who can say but that the stern voice of judgment, like the wilderness cry of John the Baptist has been sounded into the soul of mankind in our own times! The word of such a cataclysm is none other than the voice in the wilderness: "Repent! Repent! if civilization would flee from the wrath which is to come!"

But what is the testimony? How have we played the game? Perhaps we can excuse the makers of peace treaties for their dread foolhardiness, by saying that they were too near the sound of battle to hear the voice of judgment. But who shall condone the generation twenty years afterwards that simply with blithe forgetfulness continues to make ready the world again for the next great Armageddon? Who now are the trifling children in the market place?

Several months ago, it was reported in the newspapers that a disturbance took place on the streets of London when the royal party was placing a wreath on the monuments to the fallen dead of the World War. A lone voice was heard as a man cried out: "Hypocrisy—you are only preparing our country for another war!" The report is that the man was apprehended and detained for insanity. Granted, that he acted irregularly, but there is room for a question whether that man was more insane than the world which piles up her armaments in a race to see who shall be strongest.

And what of our days of prosperity when the joyousness of a wedding feast has been abroad? Is there any evidence that when our generation has lived in peace and rising incomes and economic satiety that these have been days of poise and spiritual perspective? Our generation has had such times. Such times have not been characterized by a serious effort to store up wisdom that shall make our economic prosperity the privilege of all. Rather the witness of our present chaotic world gives testimony to the truth that we have so greatly abused our gifts of plenty, of liberty and democracy, of scientific achievement that it is a real question whether we shall ever again in our times have a world which can enjoy the hard bought privileges of centuries.

Even in the religious world, days of peace and prosperity, according to Richard Niebuhr, made a religious emphasis where "A God without wrath brought men without sin into a kingdom without judgment through the ministration of a Christ without a cross." Like the children of his own generation, we have too often been content to let the man of Galilee stand aside, or we have crucified him afresh.

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But wisdom is justified of her children. There is no other word for the church of this generation than the word of John and Jesus: "Repent—the kingdom of God is at hand!" To a civilization that like the prodigal son has gone off into the far country and is feeling the pinch of famine, we must say: "Repent and believe." Christ alone has the word of redemption. There is forgiveness and healing for the nation and the civilization that will take the prophetic message of judgment, and the Christian message of redemption, in dead earnest. Repentance is the only proper mood for the church and the society of which she is a part.

The message of Christ to our own time is that we must not be the children of the market place who refuse to be in earnest, but children of wisdom. Nothing less will do than that there be raised up a company of people who will dare to be the children of God through the power of the living Christ. People who see the perspective of the judgment of the Eternal on life, who

are willing to put goodness and righteousness and love first in their lives. Only that kind of a company in our times can save this generation.

The leaders of church and state in his day smiled when they saw people taking him seriously—and they got angry, plotting his doom. Still today there are pagan currents in the life of nations where with renewed force he is being called an impossible fool. Jesus' way does not mix with the philosophy of nazi force and military discipline. But still we dare to ask in his name: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." In his way is sanity and poise for our mad world.

III. WHAT ABOUT THE INDIVIDUAL?

In an age like this we are all of us individuals. As Christians it is for us to ask ourselves whether we are taking God seriously or if we are living in a religious world of make-believe. It is the most dangerous thing for a soul to go drifting aimlessly and like the children in the market place have no concern and refuse to hear the voice of judgment and of grace. Too many of us are content to have no spiritual enthusiasms, and be neither hot nor cold, but tepid in regard to Christ's gospel. Our indecision renders us spiritually ineffectual. And so we go on drifting, hoping one day to land in heaven. But the truth is that no one ever drifts into the Kingdom of God. Strong men take it by faith.

Thus it was that out of that dreary age, Jesus formed men, strong men, brave men, men of high purpose and decision. They grasped at the Kingdom with the violence of a faith that would not let go, for they saw that only in that name, and only in that crucified man was their salvation for their world. They laid hold on Christ and were made strong. That is the story of the forming of the community which has left the world the impact of faith and saving life that is still ours in Christ. It became a wonderful age and generation for the world, for those who were real and genuine, and in earnest about God in the midst of the fickle children of indecision who characterized it. None who came to Christ were denied. Not one. But "as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become the children of God."

His spirit still calls to us today. Sometimes in our personal life it is in the sad tones of a shattered hope, or disappointed dream. Sometimes in the judgment call of personal loss or sadness. Sometimes it is the wrestling of the soul in the midst of the sins that overwhelm us. Or again it may be in the gladder days of prosperity and when joy runs full to overflowing. The Master is with us there and asks for an allegiance which will not be disturbed by any unholy affection. In the midst of all this which goes to make up our lives, for our souls' sake let us be in earnest about our religion. For this is not something we can trifle with. It is a matter of giving a full loyalty to Christ and his cause.

WARS are now entirely economic in their origin. Such wars are never won. They are only, as always, lost both by the victor and the vanquished.—BERNARD M. BARUCH.

The Sanctuary in American Life

BY EDGAR A. LOWTHER

And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and he entered, as his custom was, into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up to read. Luke 4:16.

Not forsaking our own assembling together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day drawing nigh. Hebrews 10:25.

WE immediately sense the contrast between the custom of Jesus who from youth was a regular attendant at the synagogue and the later custom of some members of the Christian society who neglected the public assembly of worship. In the passage in Hebrews the author exhorts against any defection from the public assembly on account of persecution or the appeal of pagan cults. What would the author of a new epistle to the Protestant Christians in America write, contemplating the larger proportion of the members of the church absenting themselves from public worship? At least for the word "some," he would have to substitute the word "many," so that the phrase would read, "not forsaking our own assembling together as the custom of many is." There is, as yet, no danger of persecution from without but grave peril from within. Those who decry proposed legislation for taxing church property might better decry that greater peril of a nominal membership that does not support the church by its presence, its prayers, its gifts and service.

I

The original and central idea of the church was that it was a fellowship of worship. This raises the question as to its fundamental meaning. The root of the word "worship" is "worth" and involves the homage that man gives to what is of real worth. We worship only what is worthy or excellent, hold in reverence those spiritual values that have been exalted for centuries: goodness, beauty, love and truth. However, as Christians we do not worship abstract virtues for virtues are vital only as they become dynamic in human experience. As God represents the sum of all moral and spiritual excellence, is symbolized in terms of personality, to him we offer in the fullest sense our worship, a worship so searching that it issues in the dedication of all we have and are as a fitting response to the divine nature.

If God, as William Adams Brown defines him, is "the reality that is most excellent in the universe, the basic fact on which our faith in all other good depends" and "with whom a fellowship is possible that gives joy to life, strength for work and inspiration for high adventure," then worship becomes the path to self-realization.

To the ancient Jew the symbol of worship was the sacrifice. The principle of sacrifice was carried over into the Christian church where it was filled with spirit-

ual content. The essential truth remained, that the worship of God finds its expression in sacrifice, involving the gift of self as the most suitable offering. The burning of flesh on the temple altar, the smoke of the sacrifice ascending on high, as forms passed away, but the principle of sacrifice remains to this hour.

We recall the deeper lessons of Christ's death in the offering of self he made, as mentioned in the words of Paul, "Christ, our passover, has been sacrificed for us"; and of the author of Hebrews, "if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling them that have been defiled sanctify unto the cleanness of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered up himself without blemish unto

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God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God." There is a tremendous sweep of progress reflected in this language as we pass from the purpose of sacrifice in worship as cleanness of the flesh to a cleansed conscience. This makes worship the most significant of all the acts of the human spirit. In his first epistle Peter speaks of the church as "a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, offering up spiritual sacrifices to God through Jesus Christ."

Many doubtless attend church for other purposes than to offer up "spiritual sacrifices to God through Jesus Christ." It may be they go for purely social reasons, to meet their friends or engage in welfare work. It is better that young people should attend church to meet their friends than not at all, as friendships made and cherished under such auspices are far more wholesome than those made in most places in the outside community. Church attendance may be prompted by the desire to be respectable, and respectability in itself is worth while. To go to church because the good will of the community is involved is better than utter indifference. Something good might be said for these reasons for church attendance but they are all on the lower level of expediency.

True worship brings one something far finer and more rewarding, an experience of real values. It grants the vision that can "look not at the things which are seen but the things which are not seen." We have been living too much with seen and temporal values and too little with abiding realities. We have shown ourselves at home in the realm of stocks and bonds, dividends and tangible securities, but outside these we are lost. We have no sense of at-home-ness in that spiritual realm where values never depreciate. Rufus M. Jones reminds us that we need to cultivate the capacity to find God here and now, as a real, living, intimate companion. "If we do not find him walking with us, it is not because he has vanished of his own accord, or has been banished by the hypotheses of science, or has been driven from the world by its sin and wickedness.

"It is because we have failed to cultivate our vision, our power to see him, our gifts of communion and fellowship. We have trained our eyes to see *things,* to count dollars, to measure distances. We have neglected the most important capacity that belongs to a man, the capacity to see God."

II

When Christians worship they are assembled in Christ's name and have a right to expect his presence and blessing. Here, the name is no word of magic but defines the spirit of our worship, the spirit that characterized Christ's attitude when he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. We know what worship is and how to worship because we know the God in whom we believe and whom we worship. We do not worship an idea, a philosophical absolute, a great first cause, a cosmic force or emergent evolution but the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Creator of the universe, the source of all the power and wisdom reflected in creation.

We believe with Harry Emerson Fosdick that "he who travels merely the path of electrons, atoms, molecules, toward a vision of the ultimate, misses it and that he who travels the road of spiritual values, goodness, truth and beauty, finds it. The eternal and creative power cannot be adequately approached through the metrical world alone; the innermost nature of the ultimate is revealed also in the personal world of spiritual values—of that we are confident."

This highest approach to God, the one that is most rewarding, is through Jesus Christ. Thus, we do not worship in his name the creation but the Creator, not nature but nature's God, the infinite Father of love, whose glory is revealed supremely in Jesus Christ. Nature worship is awe inspiring but in itself it is not Christian worship. The thrill of a sunrise or a sunset, the feeling of awe before Mt. Rainier or Shasta or Mt. Blanc, is akin to sublime, but it is not the kind of worship suggested by Jesus when he defined the Christian church as two or three gathered together in his name. Paul was so profoundly moved by God's revelation in Christ who humbled himself, took upon himself the

form of a servant, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, that he saw the time coming when at the name of Jesus every knee would bow and every tongue confess that he is Lord, to the glory of God, the Father.

My own conviction is that in Christian worship, where the individual truthfully and spiritually participates in the exercises of the fellowship of believers, man is caught up into the eternal society where, with Christ, he has unalloyed communion with God. That kind of worship is the highest attainment of the human spirit and should be man's chief concern. We need a new vision of Christ at worship. We might well come to him as the disciples did on one occasion when they were profoundly impressed as they saw him praying and offer our own petition, "Lord, teach us to worship as well as to pray."

Jesus has not left us without guidance in this high concern of life. The answer he gave to the Samaritan woman is still valid, "God is a spirit and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth, for such doth the Father seek to be his worshipers." If we realize the full import of this statement, we must consider worship not only as man's chief concern but as God's supreme desire.

Yet we Protestants are careless and indifferent about it. We have turned our sanctuaries into auditoriums; our preachers have become too much lecturers and debaters rather than priests and prophets; we have often allowed worship services to deteriorate into second class entertainments. Instead of worshiping God in the beauty of holiness, we have permitted ghastly blunders in architecture that in no sense remind seekers of their eternal relations. Instead of congregations offering up spiritual sacrifices unto God we have audiences drawn together by curiosity.

It is time for us to return to the primitive plan of going to church to worship. The empty pews in our churches are an eloquent proof of our spiritual failure. No wonder many people do not get anything out of worship, when they do not prepare themselves for it during the week. To attain this supreme expression of the human spirit and such attendant blessings as vision, humility, exaltation, illumination, dedication and peace without any effort on our part, is sheer stupidity or presumption. The whole attitude toward church attendance would be revolutionized if people would bring to it prepared minds and hearts. To practice the presence of God daily would make weekly worship in the public assembly a source of inspiration and power far beyond our present experience.

Muriel Lester reminds us that worship is an art and like all arts demands practice and discipline. "There is a definite discipline to be gone through before one can master any art, whether of painting, verse-making or music-making. The art of worship aims at the attainment of reality, at the achievement of perfect beauty and truth. As in other arts those who have a natural aptitude for it can find pleasure without great trouble or difficulty. But soon they find it is not enough merely to pray when one feels like it. It's twenty-four hours a day that we must give to our art."

The view of worship as an art making real demands on time and effort conflicts with the popular doctrine of personal liberty. Youth especially desire their freedom but true freedom is never without restraint. In the exercise of his individual liberty with reference to Sunday as a day of worship and rest, one needs good judgment as well as freedom. The circumstances of our age require recreation and those who work with hand or brain during the week have a right to wholesome change. But the guiding principle in choosing recreation on Sunday should be due consideration of what really re-creates and is not inconsistent with worship.

Worship and rest are two essential principles of life and are never in conflict. If, however, recreation becomes dissipation, it weakens the moral fiber and becomes not only the desecration of the Sabbath but of human personality. When the individual ceases to worship and makes Sunday purely a holiday, his spiritual nature atrophies; he loses his sense of God, of sin, of duty, of eternal life. He is not stirred by the challenge of holy enterprises in his preoccupation with the selfish pursuits of his own limited life. The man with no Sunday of rest and worship will at last find no rest anywhere. The widespread disregard of the Sabbath and church attendance is one of the causes of lack of reverance for all law shown in crime and social license. John Ruskin was right when he declared that in a nation that ceases to worship, "Literature becomes frivolous. Science is cold. The eye of youth is not lighted by the hope of other worlds, and age is without honor. Society lives for trifles and when men die, we do not mention them."

Another objection to church attendance which is offered by many, especially young people, is that they don't get anything out of it. Isn't it time to shift at least some of the responsibility from the church to those who have this attitude? Does not this excuse for absence from the sanctuary betray a fundamental fault, an unwillingness to prepare for worship and thus concentrate in the sanctuary on the high art of communion with God. The besetting temptation of our time is to worship by proxy rather than by participation. Let us sing as well as listen to others sing; let us pray as well as listen to the pastoral prayer; let us heed carefully the scripture lesson; let us say with real reverence the prayer Jesus taught his disciples. Let us create the atmosphere that will inspire the messenger of truth. In worship let us bring our offering of money as well as life.

In short, let us be glad to go to the house of God not as spectators but as those who go to pray, to praise, to ponder on the scripture, to reflect on eternal truths, to hold fellowship with the Eternal till we feel his presence and are renewed in mind and spirit for every high undertaking.

III

A church engaged in regular worship becomes irresistible in its influence in the community. In sincere worship the channels of communication with the spiritual forces of the universe are opened and man, the worshiper, receives the enduement of power. Only in the strength and inspiration of this experience can we render the service needed to bring in the kingdom of God. It is indeed significant that the most public

minded citizens in the country, the most philanthropic and generous, those devoted to humanitarian enterprises are the active members of our churches and synagogues. The greater part of the money that is given to all good causes comes from those who are regular in their habits of worship which brings into life a deep sense of spiritual and social responsibility. To their ability to give they add the spirit of willingness, of self-denial, the love of God and man. They realize that to have is to owe and not to own, to share with others as stewards of the grace of God.

Worship and work are related as vision and task, the essential factors of a useful life. Out from the places where men gain serenity and strength, they go to right the wrongs of the social order, to make their lives socially redemptive. They refuse to believe that war is inevitable; that poverty cannot be abolished; that human nature cannot be changed by the grace of God. Life, to be lived at its best, must be lived under the spell of a vision. Man, the worshiper, becomes both seer and servant of the common good. The primary mission of the church is worship, but its inescapable implication is the manifold expression of the Spirit-filled life in any service that meets human need, irrespective of race, class or national boundaries. Worship is not detached mysticism. It is the mysticism of Jesus and Paul who were not disobedient to their heavenly vision.

We are all called to the place of worship and vision and thence to carry out the familiar prayer of Washington Gladden:

> O, Master, let me walk with thee
> In lowly paths of service free;
> Tell me thy secret; help me bear
> The strain of toil, the fret of care.

We are called to the Mount of Transfiguration, and from its summit to minister to the needy and afflicted who can be helped most by those who pray. The world waits today for those who know God to make him real to others in the wide range of human relations. Only those spiritually qualified will find it natural to practice the ethics of Jesus. It is futile to expect others to bring in the kingdom of heaven. They can't do it and won't do it. Out from the upper room fellowship the first Christian society went to witness in Jerusalem, Judea and the uttermost parts of the earth.

The sanctuary of worship is absolutely necessary in the life of the nation whose preservation must depend on those spiritual values needed to sustain any valid economic and political system. We cannot make people honest by law nor just by legislation nor socially minded by codes. Law and regulation have their proper place but they become effective only as we do justice, love kindness and walk humbly before God. A revival of church attendance is not a minor matter. It goes to the very basis of a Christian civilization. Without the cultivation of man as a worshiper, our institutions—the home, the school, the industrial order, the state—cannot survive. When man sees himself as supremely accountable to God and his fellow men, that realization will bless his home life, subordinate culture to character, humanize all labor, make the state the political expression of the will of God and the servant of the public welfare. Let us remember the high purpose of the day of worship and rest. To keep one day holy is to acknowledge God's sovereignty over all our time and the sanctity of all service as the substantial expression of a vital faith.

The supreme need of the hour is the rebirth of the Christian church as a fellowship of worship baptized with the Holy Spirit for a convincing witness in every phase of life that Christ and his gospel are the only hope of a redeemed world.

That One Face

By Lynn Harold Hough

PERHAPS the most crushing disappointment which life can bring to us comes when we are forced to admit that we have been betrayed by our own ideals. A man is not surprised when he is betrayed by his worst self. However clever his defenses he knows quite well that if he builds his life on an edifice of dishonor and evil he is courting disaster. But when a man gives himself with great enthusiasm to what he believes to be the noblest of ideals and finds that these have betrayed him, he comes upon one of the bitterest experiences of life.

A dramatic experience of this was the lot of many a young man in relation to the World War. It all received very vivid expression in the case of the great British journalist and dramatist, C. E. Montague. As an editorial writer on the *Manchester Guardian* and as a dramatic critic he had made a reputation which almost any man in the English-speaking world might have envied. His thought was acute and critical and his style was one of an integrated power and loveliness, which made many men gasp as they read his best writings. When the World War came on, Montague was too old for enlistment, but he gave his enthusiasm unhesitatingly to the cause of the Allies and attempted to enlist. He was refused. He met the refusal in a way of particular resourcefulness. He dyed his hair, appeared at another recruiting office where he was not known and succeeded in being admitted to the army. His colleagues on the staff of the *Manchester Guardian* gave him a dinner at which the toast was proposed: "There are many men of whom it is said that their hair turned white in a night through cowardice. We drink to the only man on record whose hair changed its color in a night through courage." So they sent him off to the war.

Montague survived the tragedies of the war and came back a strangely saddened and different man. He published the tale of his disappointment in a curiously poignant and powerful book, *Disenchantment,* which will probably be one of the very few books thrown up from the maelstrom of the war which will be alive a century from now. The bitter disillusionment is all the more terrible because it is expressed in language which at times rises to heights of exquisite loveliness and is always characterized by great distinction. The tragedy in the case of Montague, as in that of so many men who could not tell the tale so powerfully as did he,

was betrayal by ideals which had seemed infinitely full of promise and hope.

Probably at the very hour in which we live, there are more fine young men who are cherishing ideals which are destined to betray them and to poison their lives than have been found in the world at any other period for many a century.

There is a deep pathos in looking into the bright and eager eyes of splendid Italian lads who are glowing with indubitable enthusiasm as they think of the Fascist dreams. Their lives have been lifted out of the commonplace and their hearts thrill as they commit

Lynn Harold Hough

themselves with perfect abandon to the Fascist principles. The pathetic thing about it all is realized when one comes to apprehend that in the very nature of the case the social synthesis on which Mussolini bases his hopes is bound to break and shatter into a thousand fragments. One does not like to think of the bitter and corrosive disillusionment which will come to thousands of Italian young men when they realize that their ideals have betrayed them.

ILLUSIONS OF NAZI YOUTH

There is no question about the vivid and potent idealism which characterizes the youth of nazi Germany. They have risen from dark depths of despair, they have thrown off the horror of unhappiness which the war left upon the heart of Germany. They have committed themselves with an abandon of eagerness to the hopes which connect themselves with the nazi regime. There is a new light in their eyes, there is vibrancy in their voices, there is joy and power in their very gait as they walk the streets of the German cities. But again the pathos of all this is realized when one considers that in the very nature of the case hopes built upon the principles which are central in the nazi regime are bound to come upon failure and frustration at last. And one does not like to think of the intolerable bitterness which will come to thousands of German young men when they realize that their ideals have betrayed them.

There is no question about the vivid idealism which possesses multitudes of young men in the socialist Soviet Republics of Russia. They feel with all their hearts that an old world has gone and a new world has come. A great social dream possesses their minds by day and haunts their dreams by night. They feel as if they are reaching hands over the horizon to seize a reluctant sun and bring it above the edges of the eastern sky and to welcome the glory of a great and new day. Here again the pathos of it all lies just in the fact that the very principles upon which the socialist Soviet Republics of Russia are based have within them seeds of inner disintegration. Life cannot be built permanently upon such foundations, and here we have another of the messianic hopes which so easily deceive the whole world. Coming days will reveal that Soviet Russia represents another utopia which has never faced the problems inherent in its own principles. One does not like to think of the hard and angry disillusionment which will come to untold multitudes of Russian lads when the day of realization arrives and they understand that their ideals have betrayed them.

A DREAM THAT MUST COME TRUE

The United States has been passing through a strange and confusing period of social thinking. There are no end of fine young idealists among our numbers who have applied brilliant instruments of criticism to the inadequacies of life as we find it today in this republic but who have surrendered quite uncritically to various social dreams. Each of these groups carries a vivid assurance that success will perch upon its banners, that it knows the secret for producing the new day. And the pathos of it all is that one after another these great dreams when submitted to the tests of critical thought reveal the presence of inner forces of disintegration which will prevent the dreams from coming true. It is sad to think of the fine young men all about the United States who are destined to come upon ugly and angry disillusionment when they realize that their ideals have betrayed them.

This world-wide situation makes one question imperative. Are there ideals which are so connected with the very structure of the universe that in the long run they will not disappoint us? Is there any great hope so much a part of the very character of God that in its name we could work year after year and those who followed us could work century after century in the name of an event which though far off is actually divine? The Christian answer to this question comes with unhesitating power.

In 410 when Rome was sacked by Alaric, Augustine in North Africa saw his world falling to pieces about him. The only civilization he knew was coming to an

end. The forms of his time world were breaking apart. In this tragic and testing situation he appealed from time to eternity. He produced his great work *De Civitate Dei, The City of God,* as the city of man was falling apart. He visualized the imperishable foundations of that city of God which is nobly alive in the Christian hope. In representing that city he belonged to what in our own day Professor Moffatt in brilliant phrase has called "a colony of heaven." The men who possess the vision of the city of God, whose promise is secure in the revelation which has come to them in Jesus Christ, can apply to their own land the words of Blake:

> We will not cease from mental fight
> Nor shall our swords rest in our hand
> 'Til we have built Jerusalem
> In England's green and pleasant land.

There appeared within the domain of history one mighty figure whose perfect life and perfect speech, whose redemptive death and glorious resurrection have given validity to those hopes which are central in his teaching and in the principles which are imperial in his life and work. "That one Face" shining before our eyes carries with it the authentication of the Christian faith in the city of God. This city has timeless splendor in eternity and it gives to men everyday tasks for their labor in the midst of time. Such an attitude does not mean escape from social responsibility, in fact it imposes upon us responsibility for social action. There is all the difference in the world, however, between the man who makes a social program the substitute for religious experience and the man whose experience of God in Jesus Christ has made inevitable his faith in the city of God, and his labor to make real in the midst of time that which is eternal in the life of God himself. Social action which is an expression of religion and not a substitute for it holds the promise of a great and glorious future. There may be many disappointments, there may be many disillusionments, but the hope which is based upon the character of God as we have seen that character in Jesus Christ remains secure whatever life may do to us. Social action is saved from frustration and disillusionment when it is founded upon a profound personal faith in the God who is revealed to us in Jesus Christ.

And so:

> That One Face, far from vanish, rather grows,
> Or decomposes, but to recompose,
> Become my universe that feels and knows!

Don't Be Envious

A Sermon for Children

By John R. Wilkie

ONE of the sins to which we are all prone and against which we all need to be on our guard is that of envy, of feeling that other people are better off than we are. Long ago a wise man compared envy to

Quotable Verse

Your Sons

WE, your sons, by the Marne and the Meuse
Lying so still in the moon's dim light,
Ask you why, in those dreadful years,
You sent us forth into war's black night?
You have reaped your harvest—remorse and tears,
And we, who challenged the roaring guns,
Here are lying—death-stopt—
Your sons.

We, your sons, knew not why we went.
We were so young, but you bade us go
Over the seas where the rockets flared.
There we found them, the mighty foe.
Our eyes we closed, our breasts we bared
To the lads you called the fiendish Huns.
Then came the night, and sleep—
For your sons.

Long the years since the dark came down.
Peace was the goal, but above our graves
War still rages; the spirit of hate
Rules the land which the bright Marne laves.
Terror reigns in the halls of state.
It was for peace—our strife—our fate! . . .
Why do we hear the thunder of guns—
We who are lying here—
Your sons?

Thomas Curtis Clark.

To Young Dreamers

ABOVE dark cities build
Your tall, impossible towers,
Imperious towers of faith
Built perilously high,
And gather your dreams like clusters
Of strange, bewildering flowers
From the star-bright ledges
Of the wide, impossible sky!

Lucia Trent.

When I Go Home

NO tears, no sorrowing farewells;
No drooping eye, no anguished breast;
I am but quitting scenes where dwells
The sadness that my soul oppressed:
Then let my care-worn spirit rest
When I go home!

No clasp of hands in last good-bye
Disturb my weary, waiting soul;
But, rather love-light fill the eye,
And waiting Hope point to the goal:
Let peace, unbroken, o'er me roll
When I go home!

Milton Lee.

rottenness in the bones that causes them to decay. Why do we envy others? Because we are apt to think they are better looking or have more money than we have.

Why is it wrong to envy? Because for one thing it means we fail to realize how well off we are ourselves. Whatever our lot may be, however humble or obscure it may seem, we may be sure of this—that in some way or ways we are different from everybody else and that we can do some thing or things that nobody else can. Isn't it wonderful to think that in all this world of millions of human beings no one is just like us? Our business then, instead of being sorry for ourselves because we are not just like someone else, is to be thankful that we are different and to find out how we can best use our particular talent. Do you remember the story of the dream of the workman by the roadside—how he envied the king in his chariot, the sun in the sky, and the raincloud, until he awoke and realized that in his strong right arm he had a power to use his hammer in breaking the rock that none of them had?

Then again, we envy others because we do not see beneath the surface of their lives and perceive that in some respects they are worse off than we are. Never yet was there a life without its secret sorrow, for no lot of human life is wholly blest, and we are mistaken when we think otherwise. Sometimes we even envy the birds and the beasts because they do not have to go to school and put in long weary hours trying to learn what and how they must do in order to live. Within just a few hours after its birth the colt can get on its feet and run along beside its mother. Almost as soon as it leaves the shell the bird can fly, the young quail can slip away from the nest and hide in the grass so you can hardly find it. But remember that while they can do all these things without having to learn them, that is about all they ever will know, while it is our privilege to go on learning new things as long as we live. The greater the task to be done, the longer it takes to learn the doing of it, and the long time it takes us to get ready for our work is just one sign of how much greater we are than the birds and the beasts.

> The mountain and the squirrel had a quarrel,
> And the mountain called the squirrel "little prig!".
> Bun replied: "If I'm not as big as you,
> You are not as small as I,
> And not half so spry."

A Pastoral Prayer

By Harry Emerson Fosdick

ETERNAL Spirit, take our too easily perturbed spirits in Thy calm hand today and breathe into them serenity and power. From the noisy foreground of our life, filled with anxiety and busyness, we turn to its background, the high hills from which our help cometh. Give us elevation of mind and breadth of outlook and stability within, that we may return to life again reinforced and reassured. To this end help us to put from our spirits those things that keep us from finding Thee and keep Thee from finding us.

We lay our sins before Thee. Give us a hearty and moving shame because of them. The sins of passion, whereby the gusty storm we did not control hurt our own souls and our fellows; the sins of asperity and temper wherein with meanness of thought and unkindness of tongue we made days heavy for those who trusted us; the sins of ignorance, where, like those who crucified our Lord, we knew not what we did but by our awkwardness, our blundering, our stupidity, wounded other lives; the sins of social outlook and attitude, where we let the prejudice and selfish interest of our class shut us in until we failed to take all humanity into our sympathy and care. O God, clear from our hearts the sins that keep Thee from finding us.

We lay our doubts before Thee. For all honest doubts and sincere questioning, all acknowledgment of mystery beyond our power to apprehend, all unsatisfied curiosity that leads us on, thanks be to Thee! These are Thy servants to drive us out of our complacency, where we have dwelt too long, to seek adventures Thou hast in store. But, Spirit of the living God, beneath these doubts give us still some footing for our lives, some stable faiths that this world's vicissitudes cannot shake, some strong assurances of things unseen and everlasting.

As thus we seek Thy help for our own spirits in this troubled time, we pray for the troubled world itself. We acknowledge that mankind's tragic ills are no denial of Thy presence but the affirmation of it. Thou art the God of Judgment and hast set us in a moral order where no man and no nation can with impunity defy Thy laws. O God of Judgment, Who speakest in the thunder as well as in the sunlight, speak still until Thou hast persuaded us away from our social stupidities and sins. Yet encourage us also, in our deep need, by giving us within our days some victory of righteousness over iniquity, of justice over injustice, of brotherhood over ill will, of peace over war, that we may be strengthened again in our faith and hope. Send us out from this communion with Thee and with our own souls, to be better citizens of this Republic, better fathers and mothers and children in our homes, better citizens of the whole world and members of the brotherhood of man.

Now draw close to souls so sadly darkened that their prayers can hardly rise above the clouds of their own troubled days. Upon bereaved spirits lay Thou the cooling, guiding, steadying hand of eternal hope. To anxious spirits bring interior sustenance, that, because they have been strengthened within, they may be able to handle circumstance without. O God, transfer the crux of destiny in some spirits here from the environment about them to the strength of their own souls within them. Give us triumphant spirits that all our lives may so be changed, and victories won for our sakes, for the world's sake, and for Thine. Amen.

The Local Church in Social Action

By Carl Knudsen

THE church should be ready to serve as a pioneer on the frontiers of social justice. We are generally in a better position to take advanced steps than are others; but, danger or no danger, we should fly the banners when all others are dumb with fear. At one time that meant building hospitals and academies in Montana. At another time it meant, or should have meant, anti-slavery agitation. Now, in most communities it means the winning of fair consideration for the labor cause in the face of widespread caricaturing of John L. Lewis and "all his works." Certainly, it means a spirited attack on the liquor evil against overwhelming odds; it means the redemption of the community from "legionism" and the blue-blood complex. Let us not confuse Christian social action with the simple process of putting our ecclesiastical O.K. on current prejudices. The Church Men's Club which came out bravely against six more Supreme Court judges in a town which is almost unanimously Republican is not engaged in the social action which we have in mind.

• *Knowing Facts and Forces*

How to act? Slogan number one: "Know your facts." It may be more than a coincidence of spelling that acts and facts go together. What is more pathetic than an emotional runaway with the local parson "holding the bag." It is not so much that this one particular cause is sunk but that when a momentous question does arise, with the minister officiating as Horatius at the bridge, his much needed prestige will be unnecessarily damaged. In one community a clergyman stirred the whole countryside into a crusade against town fathers for granting a large number of liquor licenses only to discover that they had no option under the state law. Like generals we need to spend plenty of time on our maps before we rush to call out the marines.

Slogan number two: "Deploy your forces." Do not let one man carry the onus and draw the fire for a cherished cause. His handicaps are numerous. He represents only one vote before the political officeholder from whom concessions are wanted. He is too easily discredited by personal enemies. His motives and his point of view are necessarily limited. Better than a lonely clergyman appealing for reform is his local church committee on social action; better still is his entire congregation, after due deliberation, voting to support his committee in their stand; superior to both is the local Council of Churches represented by fully authorized spokesmen; supreme over all is a "Citizens' Committee" representing all creeds in the community, but coached and inspired as much as necessary by church leaders.

The Plymouth Council of Churches recently won a victory against liquor dealers who had persuaded the selectmen to extend their selling hours from 11 to 12 o'clock. Everyone knew that this was only an entering wedge to more concessions, if left unchecked. The committee on social action assembled surprising facts concerning

Carl Knudsen

the consequences of the new policy upon industrial efficiency, upon home life, and upon law observance in general. A public hearing before the selectmen on the question of reconsideration was finally announced. Delegates brought to the hearing petitions bearing at least 300 names. They represented all walks and stations of life. Three were men who were on probation for drunkenness. Present at the hearing: an ex-selectman who testified, "I found in my own experience that I can get plenty drunk by 7:30." He is the town's heaviest taxpayer and his word carried "weight." A Jewish rabbi, straight from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, pleaded in the name of Pilgrim tradition and sacred shrines to keep our town free from debauchery. The selectmen's reversal of their former position would never have been accomplished by the appeal of any one church or any one pastor.

• *Wide Pastoral Contacts Are Vitally Important*

Prosecution of community-wide reforms requires cosmopolitan pastoral contacts for their maximum success. For this reason the wise pastor welcomes any opportunity for a sympathetic cooperative approach to all organizations, the only stipulation being that he must not compromise his principles or his self-respect in the process. One minister was chaplain of an American Legion post more than two years and then persuaded them to pass a resolution in favor of the Child Labor amendment.

His tenure as a chaplain was soon cut off suddenly in spite of this victory because of strong objections to the nature of his Armistice Day speeches in the schools. He found that there is a limit to the cooperation possible for a conscientious man however noble the preamble to the Legion might be. Others, however, have been more successful in cooperating with the Legion without diluting their own idealism.

• *The Pastor and Labor Organizations*

Labor union relationships are also of high importance. Chaplains to labor unions may often succeed in mobilizing the workers in favor of church sponsored legislation. Except on the liquor issue the resolutions of church bodies and of labor bodies are in fact almost identical. Why not get together?

Why indeed! The answer for too many is that the parish sentiment would be first offended and then outraged by any such procedure. For the pastor to be chaplain to the Mystic Knights of the Sea or the Chamber of Commerce is unquestionably orthodox. But between a labor union and a pastor there should be a great and safe gulf fixed! If this is the sad state of "public opinion" in his local parish the pastor may well welcome the opportunity for a worthy object lesson in Christian cosmopolitanism. Should he, unwisely, become a labor partisan he will draw the fire which he deserves. If he is a pastor of all the people, however, he will be for labor when it is right and against labor when it is wrong. When he wins a reputation for fairness to all parties even his banker deacons may bless his labor union speeches. They may live in hopes that their pastor will turn the unions toward "reasonable" policies and in a measure offset the ominous influence of unsanctified

agitators. They may live to see a labor union attend their church in a body. They may see both the churches and the labor unions strengthened and purified by the mutual understanding which their upstart pastor has brought forth.

But what shall we do with politicians and their politics? If our final goal is pulpit pyrotechnics the only answer is to score the former and scorn the latter and to do it with all our might. But if we are aiming for community betterment the methods of the blind boxer are hardly to be recommended. There are times and places where nothing but a frontal attack and a merciless crusade against politicians will have any measurable effect. But in the vast majority of cases the only practical technique is the psychological approach to the politician and a statesmanlike use of political methods to gain our ends. Several "don't's" are in order:

• *Some Significant Don'ts for Leaders*

1. Don't put yourself or your church in the foreground any more than is absolutely necessary to gain your point. Work quietly and behind the scenes. Let the politicians know that your team is determined but let him carry the ball. Play "interference" for him when he is tackled by the opposition. But let him make the touchdown. His livelihood depends upon his ability to win victories. He cannot afford to be forced into action in an open encounter with you. Let him wear the laurels and he will be on hand next time looking for more.

2. Don't confuse stubbornness with integrity. In Massachusetts the public may vote to render their town absolutely "dry," or "dry" with the exception of package store sales, or "dry" except for beer and wine. In one town the Council of Churches led a fight to oust all kinds of liquor selling licenses except those of package stores. The church people did not bless package stores but conceded that another trial of absolute prohibition would not commend itself to the public. The victory was decisive. Restaurant-saloons went out of business and progress toward civic decency was achieved. In another town, however, the proposal to leave the package stores alone was met with near-violent opposition from very sincere church people. Any slightest hint that Christians were not unalterably opposed to the whole firewater business from A to Z was unquestionably the work of a heavy horned devil. A hundred bootleggers were more welcome than one package store dealer basking in the sunlight of the churches' tacit approval. All appeals to churchmen by churchmen to win one battle at a time were more than futile. Result: a two to one vote for liquor selling in all its forms. Generals do not insist on winning their wars in one fell swoop. They are not branded as "weak-kneed compromisers" whenever they use a little strategy. They do not confuse stubbornness with integrity.

• *The Peril of Claiming Divine Indorsement*

3. Don't claim divine indorsement for political views. Politicians of all denominations resent the pontifical pose on the part of clerical crusaders. It savors of a blow below the belt. We may well claim otherworldly support for our principles but for the application of those principles we must rely upon human wisdom of a decidedly finite scope. Few politicians are superstitious enough to believe that our particular panacea was planned above the stars. The sharp disagreement of equally earnest delegates from on high is enough to dispel any such illusion. We can, of course, win many points by superior earnestness and sometimes by superior mastery of facts involved in certain issues. Officeholders cannot claim a working knowledge with very many sociological phenomena. But they can claim patriotic motives of equal worth with ours. They do not achieve their best results when cast in the role of Mephistopheles.

When we have said all this in favor of strategy and the psychological method in social action we need to close with a clarion call for courage in the day when there is neither time nor opportunity to summon community support to our side. There must needs come times when we must risk our professional fortunes in a lone battle with wrong.

• *Lessons from a Cranberry Pickers' Strike*

A cranberry pickers' strike broke rudely into the quiet self-confidence and self-righteousness of a typical New England town. The workers, mostly Portuguese Negroes, were demanding an increase from their 35 cents an hour to a wage of 80 cents hoping that they would get 50 or 60 cents in the final assize.

The repercussions of the local newspapers were true to form and almost enough to precipitate "vigilantes" violence. "Outside communistic agitators" had started everything. The standard of living for the workers was remarkably low. They lived in owner-provided shacks on the edge of the bogs and their menu hardly ever offered anything beyond beans, coffee and homemade bread with cheap mackerel occasionally for variety. "Deputies" soon kept "agitators" away. With protected strike-breakers arriving daily it looked as if the strike would be lost.

Social action by church congregations or church committees was obviously futile. Small bog owners sprinkled every Sunday morning aggregation and workers were, in the main, not Protestants. The average man on the street was not sympathetic with the strikers. But one minister felt that Sunday morning silence on the burning issue of the day would be a betrayal of his Master. He spoke out with unvarnished frankness. He pictured a cranberry worker on his hands and knees wielding a heavy scoop through prickly bushes, emerging at eventide with bruised knees, torn hands and a sore back. He explained the seasonableness of the labor. Even in the ten weeks of picking and screening, at least a third of the time was taken out on account of rain. The pastor also referred to the splendid price which the berries were then bringing and asked candidly if the press and the public were playing fair with the "underdogs" in this affair.

Reaction was instantaneous. Cranberry-bog-owner-parishioners grew cold and stare-eyed when they met their minister. Some have not been inside that particular church since they felt the shock of that pulpit electricity. But a daily newspaper in that town blazed forth with a most amazing editorial.

• *An Editor's New-Found Faith in the Church*

"It restores one's faith in the church," said the editor, "when one encounters a minister who does not look with unseeing eye upon the manifold specific failings of his congregation, who does not fear to drag a lie out of its hiding place in the dark chambers of the heart and expose it, with all its blackness, in the bright morning light of the Sunday service; who does not swallow like a timid child every sophism spoken by self-interest and vice to make the vile appear virtuous, the worst appear best and the wrong appear right.

"But lest we fail to practice what we preach, let us be specific. We have in mind the cranberry situation. The name of the minister whom we are applauding you do not need to be told. The still small voice has triumphed over the hoarse-roaring lie of the multitude. Editors—and we fear we are perhaps among them—are changing their minds. Bog owners themselves are now beginning to admit that cranberry picking requires skilled labor and that 80 cents an hour is not too much to pay for such work."

The cranberry strikers since that fateful week in the fall of 1933 have been receiving their 50 cents an hour. Many have received 60 cents from owners who before this episode never doubted that 35 cents an hours was a just wage. The battle was won because a lone voice from ranks other than their own felt a divine call to speak in behalf of the toilers.

WHO'S WHO in THIS ISSUE

REV. ALBERT EDWARD DAY *is the minister of First Methodist Church, Pasadena, Cal. Earlier pastorates were at Bellefontaine, Cincinnati, Delaware and Canton, O., Pittsburgh, Pa., and Baltimore, Md. He has given lectures on preaching at Bangor Seminary and Yale, and has held posts of responsibility in the fields of missions, education and social service. His latest book is entitled* God in Us: We in God.

Since 1932 Rev. ALFRED W. HURST *has* ministered at the Pilgrim Congregational Church, Chattanooga, Tenn. For a time he was college pastor and Professor of Bible at Elon College in North Carolina. Mr. Hurst received his M.A. and B.D. degrees at the Divinity School of the University of Chicago.

Having been awarded his M.A. degree from the University of Texas, Rev. CHARLES H. HEIMSATH taught in that university for four years. He pursued theological studies in Yale Divinity School and received his B.D. degree there. Following a pastorate at First Baptist Church, Bridgeport, Conn., he went to First Baptist Church, Evanston, Ill., where he now ministers.

Rev. CLIFFORD A. NELSON *was reared* in a Lutheran parsonage, and received his education at the University of Minnesota and Augustana Lutheran Seminary. In 1929-30 he was German-American exchange student in theology and church music at Leipsig University. For the past three years he has ministered at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, St. Paul, Minn., having come to St. Paul from St. John's Church, Rock Island, Ill. Mr. Nelson was delegate of Lutheran Augustana Synod to the Oxford and Edinburgh Conferences.

Ordained in the Methodist Episcopal ministry in 1906, Rev. EDGAR A. LOWTHER held pastorates in New York City, Morgantown, W. Va., Wichita, Kan., and Oakland, Cal. Since 1931 he has ministered at the Temple Church, San Francisco, which has recently united with the First Congregational Church. The new and larger church, under the leadership of Mr. Lowther and Jason Noble Pierce, is called the First Congregational Methodist Temple.

Following a number of years as professor at Garrett, and as president of Northwestern University, Rev. LYNN HAROLD HOUGH became minister of Central Methodist Church, Detroit, and later of the American Presbyterian Church, Montreal, Can. Since 1930 he has been Professor of Homiletics and Comprehensive Scholarship, also Dean, at Drew University. His sermon "That One Face" was preached at The Chicago Sunday Evening Club.

Rev. HARRY EMERSON FOSDICK *is minister of the Riverside Church, New York City.*

Rev. CARL KNUDSEN *ministers to the* Church of the Pilgrimage, Plymouth, Mass.

TITLES AND TEXTS

What Pulpit Readers are Preaching About

D. W. CHARLTON, First Baptist, East New Market, Md. "The Forgotten Fundamental." Prov. 1:7a—"Reverence for the Eternal is the first thing in knowledge. . . ." (Moffatt)

PAUL A. FRIEDRICH, First Methodist, Atlantic Highlands, N. J. "The Insight of Reverence." I Cor. 2:15—"He that is spiritual judgeth all things."

THOMAS TEN HOEVE, New Brooklyn Reformed, Brooklyn, N. Y. "The World Within." Prov. 4:23—"Out of the heart are the issues of life."

JOSEPH C. CARROLL, Second Baptist, Lafayette, Ind. "How Much Can You See?" II Kings 6:17—"Open his eyes that he may see."

FOR YOUR SERMON AND TEXT

. . . . . .
Title of Sermon

. . . . . .
Text used (write out the text)

. . . . . .
Name of minister

. . . . . .
Name of church

. . . . . .
Address

WILLIAM P. LEMON, First Presbyterian, Ann Arbor, Mich. "Sensing the Infinite." I Kings 8:27—"But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded."

JAMES C. PERKINS, Congregational Christian, Columbus Grove, O. "The Peril of Easy Religion." Amos 6:1a—"Woe to them that are at ease in Zion."

VICTOR M. RHEIN, First Congregational, South Norwalk, Conn. "Overcoming Our Anxieties." Matt. 6:25—"Be not anxious. . . ."

W. NELSON WINTER, Calvary Evangelical, Baltimore, Md. "Content With Failure." Exod. 2:21—"And Moses was content to dwell with the man."

STEPHEN D. PYLE, Peking Union Church, Peiping, China. "Keeping Our Balance." Job 27:5—"Till I die I will not put away mine integrity from me."

RODNEY L. MCQUARY, Lynnhurst Congregational, Minneapolis, Minn. "A Colony of Heaven." Phil. 3:20—"But we are a colony of heaven."

ROLLIN GOODFELLOW, Pine Street Congregational, Lewiston, Me. "The Humble Great." Matt. 10:39—"The rulers of the gentiles lord it over them and their great ones exercise authority over them; but not so among you: for whosoever would be great among you shall be servant of all."

The Editor's Page

The Event of the Month

ALL the stories of what happened to Pharaoh at the crossing of the Red sea, to Sennacherib when the Assyrians "came down like a wolf on the fold," to the Spaniards when William the Silent cut the dikes of Holland, or to Napoleon's Grand Army amid the snows of Russia, are recalled as one reads the current news from China. There a ruthless and victorious army, fully equipped to gain a smashing victory over a half-armed foe, is bogged down in one of the most devastating floods in modern history. The mighty Yellow river, held within banks only by the ceaseless vigilance and labor of engineers, has been loosed to sweep across the land. In more than a dozen places the dikes have been broken, and the Japanese admit that the desperate efforts of their engineering corps have been unable to harness the raging waters. Some Japanese troops have been lost, and whole divisions have had to abandon their heavy guns and machinery in a wild retreat to safety. Huge numbers of Chinese civilians are also reported to have been drowned. The rest of the world, as well as Japan, stands appalled at the determination of a nation which will inflict such suffering on its own people in order to halt an invader. But the Japanese drive from the north toward Hankow, China's temporary capital, has been definitely halted by the loosing of the river. And Japan must now know that it is dealing with a nation which will not accept defeat. A whole empire's dream of imperial expansion is being drowned out beneath the swirling waters of the Yellow river flood.

China Cuts The Dikes

The Book of the Month

WE TOO ARE THE PEOPLE. *By Louise V. Armstrong. Little, Brown & Company, $3.00.*

THE saddest fact, and perhaps the most important fact, about the United States right now is the presence of almost 14,000,000 unemployed in a normal working population of 45,000,000. Perhaps there are more than 14,000,000; no one dares find out the accurate figures. Most of these people are "on relief." As such, they constitute the supreme challenge of the hour to the churches and to the Christian ministry, for people living on relief are living within daily sight of physical and moral tragedy. How much do the ministers and members of our Protestant churches—particularly in what we call our "good" churches—*really* know about these Americans on relief? Not as statistics and not as sociological problems, but as *people*. They know all the jokes about shovel-leaning; they have heard all the rumors about grafting and political manipulation; they have wrung their hands publicly about the cost of the whole business. But what do they know about the people who, except for relief, would be on the human refuse pile? The sad fact is that most middle class Americans who have managed to escape relief themselves really know next to nothing about this human tragedy which is taking place on their own doorsteps. Mrs. Armstrong has written the first book which, so far as I know, supplies knowledge where knowledge is desperately needed. She has simply told the story of her three years of service as relief administrator in a Michigan county. But what a story! She has written a book which deserves to stand right beside *Middletown,* and which, in the present state of the nation, is even more informative.

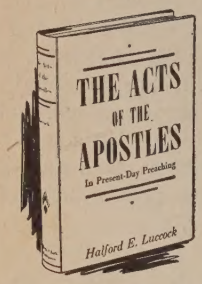
A Thought for the Month

NO MAN'S industry or devotion to his task can be impugned on the ground that, with the advent of summer, his fancy turns to thoughts of vacation. A good and great preacher who died not long ago testified that he never left his work without reluctance and never neared the end of a vacation without a feeling of profound relief. His sincerity is beyond suspicion but he is little to be envied and not at all to be imitated in this respect. Perhaps he did not begin early enough in life to learn how to rest and re-create himself, and so was never quite able to take a vacation with a clear conscience. One ought, to be sure, to come back from a vacation as gladly as one goes to it, bounding to his work with renewed energy and interest; but that is not to say that there is any merit in clinging desperately to one's desk or pen or pulpit when the normal rhythm of life indicates relaxation. But what if conditions are such that a vacation, in the ordinary meaning of the term, is impossible? After all, it is only the fortunate few who can put aside their duties and seek a change of scene for a month or two. Vacationing is not the privilege of these alone. There is scarcely one among the readers of this page who is not so far the master of his own time and the director of his own program that he can effect a recreative change in the emphasis and quality of his activities. One who must preach all summer may rest his mind, and perhaps rest his congregation too, by preaching a different kind of sermon. If one has been reading heavily in theology, let him turn to fiction and poetry. If one's working habit is to read voluminously, let him try reading sparingly and reflectively. It might be well to cultivate the belief that the world, bad as it is, is not on the brink of utter ruin. For some, a vacation in the deep woods is valued chiefly because it saves them from reading the news from China, Spain and Germany. Those who can renew their faith in God and man without taking to the woods or closing their minds to the news, will be the gainers. In short, vacation is not a change of place but a change of pace, a shift of emphasis, a relaxation of tensions, a renewal of neglected interests.

On Taking a Vacation

Charles Clayton Morrison

MUST BOOKS for PREACHERS



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By Halford E. Luccock

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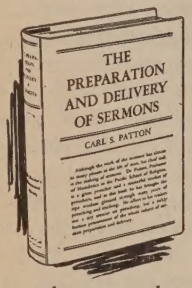

The Preparation and Delivery of Sermons

By Carl S. Patton

"Another book about preaching!" some will exclaim when they see this title. The answer is, "Yes, and a good one at that." Even the experienced preacher will be helped by this book. It will remind him of many things forgotten and will stimulate his early ideals concerning the primacy of preaching. *(Garrett Tower)* $2.00

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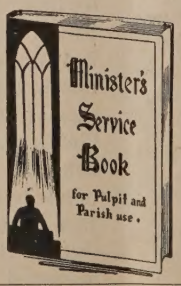

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